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STATE OF VERMONT.

Department of Agriculture.

REPORT ON

Summer Travel for 1894.

MONTPELIER:

PRESS OF THE WATCHMAN PUBLISHING CO.

1894.





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REPORT.

To the Chairman and Members of the Board of Agriculture :—

Agreeable to instructions from you, I have made investigations as to the extent of Summer travel in Vermont for the present year, and as to the revenue received by the State from this source. In making this investigation I have attempted to get full reports from all persons who have opened their houses to this travel, and have delayed this report several days in order to get the last report possible, as I have greatly preferred actual reports to estimates.

As showing how extended I have attempted to make this investigation, I will say that during the last days of August inquires were addressed to the postmasters in each town in the State, asking them to send to me the names and P. O. address of each person in their respective towns who have entertained Summer tourists this season. Reports were sent from nearly every town in the State, and the list so supplied contained over four hundred names. A circular letter was sent to each person on this list, asking them to fill out and return to me the answers to the following questions:

- 1.—Name of House?
- 2.—Name and P. O. address of Proprietor?
- 3.—Number of different guests for the season 1894?
- 4.—Total amount received for board and rooms?
- 5.—Estimate of total amount paid by your guests for livery, whether paid to you or others?
- 6.—How has this travel compared this season with previous seasons?
- 7.—Do you expect to entertain summer travel next season?

8.—How many do you expect to be able to accommodate?

9.—What price for room and board shall you charge?

In the letter accompanying this blank it was requested that nothing should be included in the replies that come from ordinary travel, but only the income from tourists and boarders for the summer. The assurance was also given that the replies received would be treated confidentially and used only in getting a summary of results.

Three hundred replies have been received, and two hundred and twenty-seven report some business this season. The balance of those reporting, for one reason and another, have had no custom that has given a revenue. A large proportion of this latter class have had summer visitors, but they were relatives or friends who had come by invitation. From the 227 persons reporting more or less business in this direction we find that there has been paid for

Board and rooms	-	-	-	-	\$ 354,666
For Livery	-	-	-	-	39,239
					<hr/>
					\$ 393,905
Number of different guest	-	-			54,236.
Average amount paid by each guest	-				\$ 7.18.

As about one-fourth of the names on our list have not yet reported, and believing that those not reported are just about an average with those from whom reports have been received, and estimating on this basis, it would give a little over \$500,000 as the total revenue to the State for the three items of board, rooms and livery. I have undertaken to obtain statements from the Railroads as to their receipts from this source, but they have not yet got their returns in shape to give it. It would hardly seem possible, when we consider the large number of persons registered this season, that the Railroad receipts could fall much below the item of board, and the necessary supplies which are always purchased by travelers would be sufficient to have given to the

State in these various ways nearly or quite a million dollars. It is quite likely that the number of persons returned are somewhat in excess of the actual number of visitors to the State, as many who come here go from place to place, stopping only for a day or a single meal at each, and might therefore be registered several times.

It appears from the returns that twenty-six persons have opened their houses to this travel for the first time this season. Ninety-four report the business as better than in previous years; fifty-four that it has been an average season, and thirty-eight that this travel has been less with them than heretofore. Several did not answer this inquiry. Quite a number report that they could not accommodate nearly all that applied, and some of the houses report that all of their rooms are now engaged for next season. On the whole, the evidence seems quite strong that this business is increasing in the State, and it is gratifying to find that nearly all engaged in it report that they intend to continue in the business, as they are well satisfied with the results. It is also encouraging to know that guests who come to our State once usually become permanent customers. Our beautiful scenery, healthful climate, pure air and water, our pleasant drives and fine roads, our hunting and fishing, exercise their charm, which, when combined with the skill of our people in catering to the physical comforts of their guests, seem to have succeeded in a remarkable degree in affording satisfaction.

This business extends to nearly every portion of our State, and about one-half of the towns have a portion of this custom.

The amount of business done by different persons varies, from the farmers' home in which one or two persons have found accommodations and have paid \$25 or \$50, to our large and finely equipped summer hotels that have afforded accommodation to several thousand guests and received in the vicinity of fifty thousand dollars during the season.

Also there is a wide difference in the amount of money received for each guest. Some of the hotels have been mainly for excursionists, and each guest only remained for a meal or a day, while others have provided homes for the season. For this reason there is a wide range in the receipts per guest, varying from about one dollar to fifty dollars each. The difference in rates charged at different places also varies from \$3.50 to \$28 per week. So it can be seen that the State is providing for all classes of this travel, and the person of limited means or the person of wealth can find here accommodations and prices to suit their condition. For the purpose of showing to some extent how generally this business is distributed over the State, I have arranged it by counties and find as follows :

COUNTIES.	REC'D. FOR BOARD AND LIVERY.		NO. OF GUESTS.
Addison - - -	\$17,745		828
Bennington - - -	96,360		3,110
Caledonia - - -	26,207		6,474
Chittenden - - -	19,293		8,273
Essex - - -	750		41
Franklin - - -	17,050		1,297
Grand Isle - - -	9,495		1,681
Lamoille - - -	5,954		1,967
Orange, - - -	13,245		1,246
Orleans - - -	28,862		7,335
Rutland - - -	26,014		2,554
Washington - - -	4,335		1,647
Windham - - -	48,539		10,113
Windsor - - -	80,063		8,388

The advantages to a State from summer travel are so well stated in a letter from Hon. Joseph Battell, of the Bread Loaf Inn, who has had a long experience in the business, that I take the liberty of quoting from his letter. He says :

" I would like to suggest a variety of reasons why this summer travel is of especial advantage to a State or community.

“About three-fourths that hotel proprietors receive is distributed at once for supplies, help and the ordinary repairs of buildings and furnishment. Probably in no business is the same proportion of money so widely received and distributed, and much of it for help and perishable articles that is all clear gain. That is, I hire women who live in the neighborhood to help cook, wait on tables, do chamber work, and employ them several months, paying good wages, many of whom would not work at all for pay except for such a chance as the summer hotel offers. Young ladies from the seminaries and young gentlemen from the colleges, as well as farmer's sons and daughters, take advantage of such a chance.”

“Besides this, boarders at summer hotels leave quite an amount of money in the neighborhood. They purchase quite an amount of goods at the stores. They occasionally buy a horse, or a number of them; a cow, or a number of them. They buy maple sugar and syrup, butter and potatoes, and other articles of the farmer, often arranging their winter's supplies of such articles. Quite often one of them buys a farm or builds a house or hotel. Employment is given our mechanics, masons, painters and laboring men, and materials are bought of our mill owners, brick-workers, quarrymen, etc. I think everyone that considers will see that this is not a small matter, but a very great one, and one that the State can well afford to use active efforts to encourage.”

It needs no argument to prove the importance of this industry to the State. It is doubtful if any agricultural product, except the dairy product, is bringing as much money to the State at the present time as are our summer visitors, and even our dairy product would find here a close rival in point of profit. With no industry in the State is it so easily possible to double and treble the amount received as is this. The favorable location of the State, so near the large cities of the East, and its easy means of transportation, are all favorable to a large increase in the business in the near future.

A favorite means of travel at the present time is by coaching parties, and good roads to travel over is the main inducement necessary to bring them to our State. It may

be advisable to place before the people of the cities more complete information than they now possess in regard to the inducements there are to get acquainted with Vermont. It certainly is advisable for every community to look after their interests in this matter and see if it is not entitled to a larger share than it now receives.

It is advisable to preserve our natural scenery and to add to its attractiveness in every way that we can. It is advisable to extend our accommodations for this travel, that all who wish to come may find accommodations. It is advisable to get the best roads that we can, to protect and propagate our fish and game supply, that sportsmen who come here may find the attraction they seek.

In all legitimate ways I believe it for the interest of the whole State to encourage the coming of our summer guests.

I wish to acknowledge the kindness and courtesey of the postmasters in the State, and proprietors of hotels and homes, for having supplied so full answers to my inquiries of them.

Respectfully submitted,

VICTOR I. SPEAR,

Statistical Secretary.

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